

transmitting data packets corresponding to each SLA at or above the minimum data rate in accordance with the respective SLA;

receiving a message from a second switching point at the first switching point to indicate that traffic between a source and a destination is congested; and

adjusting a data rate at which packets corresponding to an SLA, destined for the destination, are output from the first switching point in response to receiving the message to reduce the congestion.

8. (Once Amended) The method of claim 5 wherein maintaining SLAs further comprises separating the data packets into different queues corresponding to each different SLA.

Please cancel claim 9 without prejudice.

Please amend claims 10 and 13 as follows.

10. (Once Amended) An article of manufacture comprising a machine-accessible medium that includes content that when accessed provides instructions to cause a machine to: maintain a plurality of service level agreements (SLAs) at a first switching point, each SLA having a corresponding minimum data rate;

transmit data packets corresponding to each SLA at or above the minimum data rate in accordance with the respective SLA;

receive a message from a second switching point to indicate that traffic between a source and a destination is congested; and

adjust a data rate at which packets corresponding to an SLA, destined for the destination, are transmitted in response to receiving the message to reduce the congestion.

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13. (Once Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 10 wherein the content to provide instructions to cause the machine to maintain SLAs further comprises the content providing instructions to cause the machine to separate the data packets into different queues corresponding to each different SLA.

Please cancel claim 15 without prejudice.

Please amend claim 16 and as follows.

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16. (Once Amended) A system comprising:
a first switching point to manage service level agreements (SLAs) specifying a minimum data rate for packets corresponding to the SLA, and send a message to indicate that traffic between a source and a destination is congested; and

a second switching point coupled with the first switching point to manage SLAs specifying a minimum data rate for packets corresponding to the SLA, transmit packets from the second switching point in accordance with the SLA, receive the message from the first switching point, and reduce a data rate at which packets corresponding to an SLA indicated in the message, destined for the destination, are output from the second switching device in response to receiving the message.